

# Erie County Fire Advisory Board

## Meeting Minutes

### April 27, 2006

**Call to Order & Opening Prayer:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman G Wittington who also led with an opening prayer.

**Roll Call:**

Chairman Gerald Wittington	Present	Co-Chairman Douglas Larkin	Present
Sec./Treasurer John Wicka	Present	Dennis Allen	Present
Bruce Atkins	Absent	Charles Bethge	Present
William Boldt	Present	Todd Catalano	Present
Donald Connolly	Absent	James Fyock	Present
Dennis Gibbs	Absent	Christopher Higgins	Excused
Daniel Kamman	Excused	Michael Lombardo	Excused
James Lawida	Present	Richard Litfin	Present
Richard Mariani	Present	Steve Matisz	Present
Robert Mueller	Excused	James Pluta	Present
Edward Saternus	Excused	Charles Stewart	Excused
William G. Szewc	Excused		

**Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting:** A motion was made by C Bethge, seconded by D Larkin, to accept the minutes as presented by the Secretary. The motion was duly voted on and carried.

**Commissioner's & Committee Reports**

**Commissioner's Report:** Commissioner Comerford reported on the following:

- The Department of Public Service: The last draft of the formulation of the department found favor with the Charter Review Commission. It appears that the recommendation that no one political office will have charge of the department. This is considered a very positive move and is finding acceptance from all involved in the process. The issue of funding the department is still being worked out and it appears that the legislature will retain that function.
- 800 MHz: There is much information sharing taking place between SWN, M/A Com and Erie County. They are still shooting for December 2006 to begin acceptance testing. Coverage maps are being shared and they are looking at coverage gaps where it may be challenging to have 95% in-building coverage based on current infrastructure. SWN will be taking space in the new Public Safety Campus and sites are being developed for the acceptance testing.
- Alerting: The project continues to move ahead. Equipment in the fire stations is expected to be installed beginning in September 2006. Equipment to personnel will be distributed by the end of the year.

There was a question with regard to the training of dispatchers and the Commissioner advised he will check on when the training will commence. He expects to have more information at the next meeting.

**Deputy Commissioner's Report:** Deputy Coordinator Schmittendorf presented Deputy Commissioner McCullough's report in his absence. See the attachment.

**Officer Reports:**

**Chairman's Report:** Chairman Whittington reported on the following:

- He attended to work with the Charter Review Committee whose report was detailed by the Commissioner.
- 800 MHz continues to move forward.
- Five fire companies still have not returned communication surveys to the county. They are Depew, Holland, Kenilworth, Langford and Main Transit. Efforts will be made to have these companies complete and submit the surveys.

**Co-Chairman's Report:** Nothing to report

**Secretary' Report:** The Secretary reported the letters to the members of the Public Safety Commission of the Legislature were sent and the proposed by-law change was drafted and distributed to all members.

**Reading of Correspondence:** The correspondence was read and those items needing further attention were held for either old or new business.

**School Committee:** C Steward submitted his report, which is attached.

**Drill Towers Committee:** WG Szewc submitted his report, which is attached.

**Radio Committee:** Chairman Whittington reported that most everything was covered in the Commissioner's report. He also advised that revised FAQ's for 800 MHZ and Alerting continue to be finalized and once completed, will be distributed to all fire companies.

**Legislation & Fire Prevention:** Nothing to report.

**Budget & Wall of Fame:** Chairman Whittington advised he will recommend the committee meet prior to the next meeting and hopefully within the next two weeks. There are too many issues that need addressing for the committee to sit idle. Issues need to be moved off the table.

**Rules & Mutual Aid:** The proposed change in the by-laws with reference to the times, dates and locations of meetings was read, reviewed and discussed. After discussing the matter, D Larkin made a motion, seconded by J Fyock, to accept the change as presented. The motion was duly voted on and carried. (See attached).

**Erie County Chiefs:** W Boldt reported on the following:

- The next meeting will be May 15 at Lancaster
- The seminar on handling propane emergencies was held last week and considered a success.

R Mariani reported he is working with Assemblyman Mark Schroeder on obtaining additional funding for training. It has yet to be determined if this survived the governor's veto of the last budget.

**Erie County Vol. Firemen's Assoc.:** No report

**Fire District Officers:** C Bethge reported the state spring conference is in Buffalo starting April 30. Comptroller Hevesi is scheduled to be a keynote speaker on Monday and the annual elections are scheduled for Tuesday.

**Fire Police:** No report.

### **Old Business**

**Additional Clerical Help for Fire Safety:** J Wicka advised he received word from Legislator Robert Reynolds introduced a resolution calling for a return of a full-time clerk for the Fire Safety Office. He reminded everyone that this issues needs to be supported through their individual legislators.

**October 2005 Incident:** There was a question with respect to the final outcome of the incident and the status of the instructors who were involved. Chairman Whittington advised of what was discussed at the February meeting and his understanding that Chief Wutz from OFPC continues to monitor the work of the instructors through Brian Bensted. Tiger advised that safety issues will be re-emphasized when he and Deputy Commissioner McCullough meeting with the SFIs next month. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that having Chief Wutz at the next meeting would be worthwhile. C Bethge made a motion to invite Chief Wutz and D Larkin seconded the motion, which was duly voted on and carried. The Chairman will extend the invitation to Chief Wutz.

### **New Business**

**Lancaster Representation:** The letter from Lancaster Chiefs advising that Robert Mueller has been replaced as its representative will be acknowledged and forwarded to the County Executive for further processing. The new representative, Chief Ronald Rozler was in attendance at the meeting and was introduced. Also discussed was the precedent of presenting a plaque to outgoing members which would be appropriate for Mr. Mueller. The chairman advised he will arrange for the plaque and also contact the County Executive's office to arrange a letter.

**FEMA Grants for 800 MHz Radios:** Chairman Whittington briefed the board on the difficulty the seven fire companies are experiencing with having FEMA follow through on the awards. It was suggested that the FAB go on record of being support of the companies getting these awards for the radios and that a letter should be sent. T Catalano made a motion, seconded by D Larkin, to send a letter in support of these department's efforts. Copies of the letter should be sent to our local congressional representatives. The motion was duly voted on and carried.

**Washington DC Trip:** R Mariani reported that he and J Wicka attended the Congressional Fire Service Institute Caucus on April 4 & 5 and he briefed the board on the results of the trip. He had the opportunity to discuss training funding and initiatives with Representative Brian Higgins who was attentive to the needs of the fire service in Erie County.

**Training & Radio Repair Issues:** J Fyock advised Tiger that North Collins has questions regarding the listing of a course scheduled for their facility. Tiger advised he would check the issue and get back to Jim.

Jim also advised that Langford had a problem getting a timely repair to their radio in their rescue truck. Tiger was unaware of the issue but said he would check into it. Jim also praised fire radio for the quick repair to Lawton's fire station radio after it was knocked out due to a lighting strike.

Jim also advised he was told by the Chief of CIRVFD that they have 15 members who need Firefighter 1 and some go back to more than two years. Tiger advised that off-hand, he does not recall seeing a significant number of training applications from CIRVFD but would take a look at this issue.

**FAB Contact list:** It was requested that an updated contact list be distributed to all FAB members and that a contact list, giving name, representation and e-mail address for all FAB members be posted to the website.

**Public Safety Committee Invitation:** Inasmuch as none of the members of the Public Safety Committee attended the meeting, it was decided to extend another invitation to the next meeting. The secretary will extend the invitation.

**Treasurer's Report:** J Wicka reported that the prior balance was \$261.82. Tonight's receipts were \$17.00 for a new worth of \$278.82. W Boldt made a motion, seconded by S Matisz to accept the report. The motion was duly voted on and carried.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 with the next meeting scheduled for May 25, 2006 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted  
John R. Wicka  
Secretary/Treasurer

**PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE – April 27, 2006**

**Currently reads:**

**MEETINGS:**

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD SHALL BE HELD AT 7:30 P.M. ON THE LAST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT THE ERIE COUNTY TRAINING ACADEMY IN CHEEKTOWAGA, NEW YORK EXCEPTING IN THE MONTHS JULY, AUGUST, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER.

THERE SHALL BE NO MEETING HELD IN THE MONTHS OF JULY NOR NOVEMBER.

THE AUGUST MEETING SHALL BE HELD THE THIRD THURSDAY IN THE MONTH, AND THE DECEMBER MEETING SHALL BE HELD ON THE FIRST THURSDAY IN THE MONTH.

**Proposal to change to:**

**MEETINGS:**

Regular meeting of the board shall be held at 7:00 p.m. on the last Thursday of each month at the Erie County Fire Training Academy in Cheektowaga, New York of the board excepting, the month November when there will be no meeting and December, when the meeting will be held on the first Thursday in the month.

The location of meetings can be changed based on a resolution approved by the body at a regular meeting of the board and the secretary providing proper notice to all members of the board advising of the change of the meeting location.

***NOTE: This proposed change was adopted April 27, 2006.***